

The Garden of Eden – Study Four – Part A

Before we examine Genesis 3, let us go back for just a few moments to the end of day six of creation week. The end of day six was the crowning of all of God's creation – the creation of man!

It was then that "... God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish [fill] the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:26-28).

There are two observations about the creation of man that remain true to the present moment.

- (1) Mankind is made unique. We as humans are unique because man is the only species created in the image of God, and after God's likeness (vv. 26, 27).
- (2) Mankind was made superior to any species. No other creature was told to rule over anything; but God said to man to rule – to have dominion (vv. 26, 28).

Man had simple instructions: reproduce and rule over God's creation. Furthermore, man was told to work: "And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it" (Genesis 2:15).

In other words, God told Adam to dress or cultivate the garden, and to keep it or guard its sanctity.

Then God explicitly said to Adam: "... Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:16-17).

Hebrew scholars tell us the last four words in verse 17 mean that "Dying, you will die." Dying spiritually (the moment you eat from the tree), you will begin to die physically.

The question has often been asked: Would Adam and Eve have lived forever had they not taken of the tree? The answer is yes!

But our concern is not what would have been, but what is. Adam and Eve both took of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and the result was as God said it would be: death, both spiritual dead and physical death – they introduced death to this world of ours – not only death but all that precedes death: sickness and disease.

And now the study of the Garden of Eden becomes a study in tragedy!

Jerry W. Arnold